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ABSTRACT

Among the many philosophic insights offered by Richard M. Weaver, rhetorical scholars have perhaps been most intrigued by his establishment of circumstance and definition as morally dichotomous sources of argument. Challenging Weaver's assumption that the identification of a rhetor's fact or genus preferences supplies necessary insights into the speaker's philosophy, this essay proposes further tests for a value-based criticism of argument. Rhetorical critics should judge (1) the morality of the rhetor's terms, (2) the morality of his or her ordering of them, (3) the validity of their application, and (4) the underlying reasons which motivated their selection. (Author/AA)

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The Problems of Using Public Rhetoric to Reveal Private Philosophy: An Analysis of Richard Weaver on the Arguments from Circumstance and Definition

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Abstract

Among the many philosophic insights offered by Richard M. Weaver, rhetorical scholars have perhaps been most intrigued by his establishment of circumstance and definition as morally dichotomous sources of argument. Challenging Weaver's assumption that the identification of a rhetor's fact or genus preferences supplies necessary insights into the speaker's philosophy, this present essay proposes further tests for a value-based criticism of argument.

The Problems of Using Public Rhetoric

to Reveal Private Philosophy: An Analysis of Richard Weaver

on the Arguments from Circumstance and Definition

In the Ethics of Rhetoric, Richard Weaver identifies three sources of argument--genus, similitude and circumstance--for the establishing of conclusions on matters of controversy.[1] Weaver pays particular attention to two of these forms--the argument of circumstance and that of definition--which he contrasts as dichotomous means for gaining insight into "a man's political philosophy... expressed in the type of argument he prefers."[2] Because the argument of genus discriminates objects into classes and, further, attributes value to the classes, Weaver terms the definitional position as being the ultimate philosophical argument--consequently, the most morally praiseworthy form. The argument of circumstance, because it merely reads the "facts" and, in an expedient fashion accepts them as coercive, is the least philosophical and least morally responsible way of knowing. By observing the arguer's apparent preference for circumstantial or definitional sources of argument the rhetorical critic, according to Weaver, may gain an insight into the moral and philosophical orientation of the arguer. Thus, Abraham Lincoln, Weaver's archtype of the definitional thinker, is judged to be a superior advocate when compared to the representative of circumstantial reasoning--Edmund Burke.

Seeking to test Weaver's claims about the insightfulness of the circumstantial and definitional sources, Dennis R. Bormann has challenged Weaver's classification of Burke as the circumstantial arguer, par excellence, and has disputed Weaver's conclusion that definition amounts to a superior rhetorical form.[3] Using content analysis methodology, James J. Floyd and W. Clifton Adams have addressed themselves to the issue of whether Lincoln was predominantly an arguer from genus and Burke a factually-based advocate.[4] In a further inquiry

into the typologies, I will maintain three propositions all of which mark a substantial disagreement with Weaver. First, the identification of valid examples of circumstantial and definitional claims is a more difficult undertaking than is implied by Weaver. Second, even universally-accepted examples of fact and genus are, in and of themselves, highly imperfect insights into the internal moral-philosophical position of an advocate in general or vis-a-vis a particular issue at hand. This suggests that the argument of definition does not necessarily domonstrate the philosophical superiority of a particular rhetor's epistemology. As a result, my third proposition holds that judgments of the moral-philosophical worth of an advocate require that the critic go beyond the mere identification of his genus or fact preferences. Specifically, critics should scrutinize the morality, validity and motives of the rhetor's use of definitional terms.

I

Bormann's effort to identify definitional premises in Burke's allegedly circumstantial speech on "Conciliation With America," and Floyd and Adams' endeavor to content analyze Burke and Lincoln's use of argument, suggests that the issue of merely identifying examples of the typologies is a fruitful starting point for this present essay. My first proposition, then, is simply to argue that the application of the typologies to actual arguments is a more difficult exercise than Weaver implies in his explanation and use of his bipolar forms. In establishing the difficulty of classifying assertions, it is relevant to consider, first, Weaver's own distinction between positive and dialectical terms. Whereas positive terms are "capable of physical identification and measurement...existing objectively in the world, whose presence supposedly everyone can be brought to acknowledge"--e.g., a rock or tree--dialectical terms are not perceived, they are constructed. Thus, a term such as "justice" is dialectical in the sense that persons understand the meaning of the term "not through sensory perception, but throught the logical processes of definition, inclusion, exclusion, and implication."[5] Since dialectical terms are subjective constructions, it is possible, even likely, that persons will have varying conceptions of the terms and will disagree as to whether or not a given situation represents, for example, "justice." Weaver identifies sociologists as being especially prone to treat dialectical terms as positive ones. Taking a sociological definition of the term "social

problem" Weaver comments: "a social problem is not something that just anybody could identify, like an elephant in a parade, but something that must be determined by a dialectical operation."[6]

Weaver's distinction between the positive and dialectic term is important, at this point, precisely because we may have cause to criticize him for the same error he finds in the "scientistic" sociologists. To wit, while it should be clear that the terms "argument from circumstance" and "argument from definition" are dialectical, Weaver uses these concepts almost as if they were positive. That is, he understates the difficulty of alleging that such-and-such statement represents a circumstantial or a definitional claim. To return to Weaver's example of the elephant, it is much more difficult to pick out a "definition" or "circumstance" from a text than to distinguish between circus animals in a parade. Since the typologies are constructions, their application to any text yields disputable classifications of argument.

Now it is true that Weaver is fully cognizant of the complications to be encountered in "naming"--i.e., in making the assumption that we know the way things really are.[7] He remarks, at one point, that all definition is circular in the sense that "The thing we have never heard of is defined for us by the things we know."[8] While thus acknowledging the subjectivity of scholarship, Weaver does not give sufficient attention to the possibiltiy that applications of the fact and genus typologies by one critic may be controverted by another. In this sense, the categorization of any given argument as circumstantial or definitional may be challenged and, as a corollary principle, all such classifications are probably valid in varying degrees. While it is true to say that Weaver makes a good case for his classifications, it does not follow that they are uncontestible.[9] Dennis R. Bormann has questioned whether Weaver's examples of Burke's situation-based claims are representative of the man, presenting counter examples of Burke as a definitional aguer.[10] Going one step further, I believe that it may be demonstrated that Weaver's placements, themselves, are disputable, whether or not they are representative.

Take, for instance, Weaver's hypothetical example of a circumstantial claim: "The city must be surrendered because the besiegers are so numerous."[11] Weaver argues that such constitutes an expedient argument because it allows the "facts standing around"--the number of enemy--to dictate the decision to surrender. However, if one considers the argument as but a part of a total enthymeme, might not the audience fill in such definitional premises

as these: it is stupid to sacrifice life in a hopeless cause; it is better to withdraw now and fight later (assuming that the surrender of the city does not imply the destruction of the army). Since this example is a hypothetical one, however, it is impossible for us to know the real context of unstated definitional premises which the arguer might later employ or which the audience might supply. Nevertheless, similar exceptions may be found in Weaver's cataloguing of actual historical arguments. In the example of Abraham Lincoln's definitional defense of a single national bank in preference to a subtreasury system, Weaver quotes Lincoln to the effect that the former is preferable to the latter because the personal interests of the subtreasurers might conflict.[12] This represents, in Weaver's view, an occasion in which Lincoln defined the "infallible tendency" of human nature and argued from this genus. However, could not one paraphrase the argument in a different, more circumstantially expedient vein, such as in the following sentence: "I will not consider the administrative efficiency or principle--monopoly power versus competition, hard money versus soft money, etc.--of the banking matter; rather, I submit that the plan cannot succeed because of the fact that subtreasurers may misuse the funds." Again, although Weaver makes a good case for his classification, the opposite may be maintained. Indeed, my paraphrase of Lincoln reads very much like Weaver's own illustration of Burke on the matter of the "Popery Laws." In this instance, Burke is quoted to the effect that because of the great number of people in Ireland, the English government will find the disabilities against the Irish impossible to maintain.[13] Does Burke merely "read the facts" or does he not examine the "nature of government" and find that no administration may long enforce unpopular measures against a large population? Indeed, to the extent that subtreasurers' tendency toward malfeasance constitutes an argument based on the genus of human nature, Burke's citation of the human tendency not to suffer repression is an argument based, at least in part, on the same genus.

To take a final illustration of the problematic nature of argumentative taxonomy, consider Weaver's example of Lincoln as a person who was unalterably opposed to slavery, holding that if one defined blacks as men, then their slavery was unacceptable.[14] To be sure, Weaver is persuasive in his description of Lincoln as an arguer from genus on the slavery question. Indeed, this is Weaver's premier example of the definitional position, for Weaver describes Lincoln's argument as "explicit," writing that the man from Illinois

"clung tenaciously to this concept of genus," that he "could never be dislodged from his position" and that he refused "to hedge on the principle of slavery."[15] Such certitude notwithstanding, Weaver himself supplies evidence to suggest that Lincoln did temporize in his position on slavery. Weaver reports that, although Lincoln acknowledged the wrongness of the institution, he did not argue for its abolition in the slave states--he asked only that the evil system should not be extended. Historian John A. Garraty interprets this position as somewhat less than entirely definitional.

> However, he [Lincoln] often weakened the force of his arguments [against slavery], being perhaps too eager to demonstrate his conservatism. "I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races," he insisted. Only constitutional methods should be used to "prevent the evil from becoming larger." Emancipation would come "in God's good time." He took a fence-sitting position on the question of abolition in the District of Columbia and stated flatly that he did not favor repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act.[16]

Weaver, to be sure, is aware of exceptions such as those given by Garraty and, in explaining why Lincoln did not free all the slaves when he had the opportunity to do so as President, Weaver observes that Lincoln "respect[ed]" the circumstances but was not "deflected" by them.[17] Such a semantic twist does not really dilute the force of the interpretation that Lincoln as candidate and as President did hedge on slavery in view of attending circumstances. Thus, even when he put forth the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln limited its effect to the states in rebellion. Blacks in the pro-Union slaveholding states remained in bondage so that the loyalty of the Unionist border states might not be threatened.[18] The point to be made here is not that Lincoln's rhetoric or actions on the slavery issue deserve censure, nor even that Weaver's interpretation of Lincoln is "wrong." My intention is merely to show that the definitional interpretation of Lincoln is, like all applications of dialectical terms, open to question.

This brief inquiry into Weaver's examples suggests that because the classification of argument is a subjective matter based on an internal construction by the critic, that uncontested examples may be unobtainable. For this reason, it may be assumed that judgments about arguments are valid with some identifiable degree of force. Weaver's failure to explicitely

consider the scholarly difficulty of applying his typologies suggests that he tends to treat them as uncontested terms--possibly claiming too much for them.[19]

II

This observation about the use of the typologies brings me to my second proposition: even assuming that a high degree of scholarly agreement could be reached on the presence of circumstantial and definitional prototypes in a given text, the mere fact of such universally-accepted classifications would supply only very uncertain conclusions about the arguer's moral-philosophical position and the worth of that position. To understand the full import of this assertion, it is necessary to consider in detail Weaver's belief that true knowledge resides in universals versus the modern view of knowledge as consisting of a collection of empirically-discovered facts. "I shall adhere to the classical proposition," writes Weaver, "that there is no knowledge at the level of sensation, that therefore knowledge is of universals."[20] Writing that facts gain meaning only by reference to a higher conceptual scheme of reality, Weaver asserts, "That the thing is not true and the act is not just unless these conform to a conceptual ideal."[21] Weaver is quite aware of the modern view that, as he puts it, "special facts represent the highest form of knowledge,"[22] and, further, he traces this view back to "William of Occam who propounded the fateful doctrine of nominalism, which denies that universals have a real existence."[23] As an example of the factual (empirical) versus universal notion of knowledge, Weaver cites the Scopes trial on evolution in which, he says, the knowing of values and essences--which were embodied in the anti-evolution law--amounted to a higher order than that of facts or collections of facts as expressed in evolutionary theory.[24] Rejecting the "fragmented" factual approach to understanding, Weaver favors a system of education which has as its aim "not merely the imparting of information to the mind but the shaping of the mind and of the personality."[25]

Having established the general proposition that one knows through universals rather than facts, Weaver describes the two corresponding means of achieving truth in specific situations. Here he contrasts analysis of a subject via dialectic (the correlary to knowledge of universals) to that of conclusions based on factual observation (corresponding to the view that details have an epistemological primacy). Weaver defines dialectic as "a method

of investigation whose object is the establishment of truth about doubtful propositions."[26] Describing the methodology of dialectic, Weaver tells us that it is the "science of naming," it "defines the subject," it enables us to know definitions, it "divide[s] things by classes," and, finally, dialectic identifies (discriminates) what belongs in categories.[27] Weaver postulates a close relationship between the dialectical methodology and the nature of dialectical terms. "[T]he dialectic which precedes it [rhetoric] will determine not the application of positive terms but that of terms which are subject to contingency of evaluation. Here dialectical inquiry will concern itself not with what is 'iron' but with what is 'good.' It seeks to establish what belongs in the category of the 'just' rather than what belongs in the genus Canis."[28] Dealing, as it does, with non-positive concepts, the dialectic is abstract rather than empirical. It is a scientific demonstration which operates according to logic.[29] Dialectic, then, is a method of coming to grips with the interpretations and evalutaions which are an integral part of knowing dialectical terms. The dialectician is cognizant of values and essences and applies such in his reasoning about things--he argues from a position defined by universals.[30]

Having explained his position that the dialectical-universalist approach amounts to a superior way of knowing, Weaver juxtaposes it to the inferior factual-empirical epistemology. Believing that the pursuit of factual and dialectic knowledge represents a kind of dichotomy, Weaver writes that, "The conclusion comes down to this: things which are discriminated empirically [according to facts] cannot thereafter by the same operation be discriminated dialectically. If one wishes to arrive at a dialectical discrimination, one has to start from a position which makes that possible."[31] Further, unlike the dialectical reasoner who begins his inquiry from a value position, the arguer who looks first to facts is prone to avoid value propositions entirely. Concludes Weaver: "The theory of empiricism is plausible because it assumes that accuracy about small matters prepares the way for valid judgment about large ones. What happens, however, is that the judgments are never made. The pedantic empiricist, buried in his little province of phenomena, imagines that fidelity to it exempts him from concern with larger aspects of reality--in the case of science, from consideration of whether there is reality other than matter."[32]

Challenging Weaver's preference for dialectical universals, Bormann attacks the Weaverian logically-oriented epistemology as outmoded, objecting that "People

in ancient Greece, and for centuries thereafter, used to delight in classifying things according to substance or genus and to base arguments on such classifications. The age of science, however, has changed our mode of thinking to a great degree. It is becoming more difficult today to argue from broad 'uncontested' generalizations. People want to know, What is your evidence? Who said so? What are the facts? In contrast, Bormann believes that the dialectical approach is obsolete: "I am afraid that unless we are willing to return to the old 'armchair analysis' prevalent before the Renaissance and unless we are willing to believe that sound argument can take place in a vacuum without reference to reality, we must disagree with Weaver's approach to argument."[33]

My own reading of Weaver suggests to me that he is more cognizant of the need to align idealized dialectic with the facts of a situation than Bormann recognizes. While Weaver does allege that the application of dialectic to political questions, for instance, would improve "the ability of an electorate to distinguish logical positions from the detail of rhetorical amplification,"[34] he, nevertheless, owes that two factors of the pure dialectic render it inappropriate as an exclusive way of knowing in human affairs. First, the pure dialectician is "neutral toward the bearing of his reasoning upon actuality."[35] The dialectic, in other words, leaves out feeling.[36] Secondly, "When a dialectic operates independently of the concrete facts of a situation, it can be destructive."[37] In support of this second observation, Weaver offers the case of Socrates as an example of a complete dialectican who, because of the lack of social responsibility his arguments implied, gave the authorities of Athens some legitimate reasons for proceeding against him.[38] Writing that an undiluted dialectic, such as espoused by Socrates "when not accompanied by a historical consciousness and responsibility, works to dissolve those opinions, based partly on feeling, which hold a society together." As a result, "It tends, therefore, to be essentially revolutionary and without commitment to practical realities."[39] Convinced that the unadulterated dialctic "does not heed the imperatives of living" Weaver concludes that "The art of politics, although it often repels us in its degraded forms, cannot be totatly abandoned in favor of pure speculation."[40] In this vein, Weaver offers the case of Henry David Thoreau's treatise on "Civil Disobedience" as an illustration of the difficulty posed by taking a purely dialectical position on a political question. From a dialectically-based stance on the nature

of man and the state, Thoreau opposed all state intervention into the affairs of men, prompting Weaver to brand Thoreau's dialectic as unrealistic.[41]

What, then, is Weaver's solution to the 'subversive" nature of extreme dialecticism? Simply stated, he believes that the defects of dialectic can be mitigated and the advantages maintained by the use of the rhetoric as a complement to a preceeding value-inspired dialectical inquiry. Arguing from Aristotle's position that rhetoric is a counterpart of dialectic,[42] Weaver concludes that rhetoric--which he defines as the situational presentation via emphasis of previously-discovered truth--can successfully relate the abstract, neutral results of dialectic to real facts and real people. Rhetoric, inthis view, "take[s] any dialectically secured position (since positive positions, like the 'position' that water freezes at 32° F., are not matters for rhetorical appeal) and show[s] its relationship to the world of prudential conduct."[43] Rhetoric corrects the defects of dialectic by: (1) taking account of audience feelings (which dialectic does not do) moving those feelings "in the direction of a goal,"[44] and (2) directing its attention to "individual men in their individual situations, so that...it takes into account what science [dialectic] deliberately, to satisfy its own purposes, leaves out."[45] Because rhetoric is particular, it is able to take popular attitudes into account, "bring[ing] opinion into closer line with the truth which dialectic pursues. It is therefore cognizant of the facts of situations and it is at least understanding of popular attitudes."[46] In this connection, Weaver believes that dialectic and rhetoric can and should be consistent. "The honest rhetorician therefore has two things in mind: a vision of how matters should go ideally and ethically and a consideration of the special circumstances of his auditors. Toward both of these he has a responsibility."[47] Continuing, Weaver elaborates one additional advantage of the joining of rhetoric to dialectic. Whereas the latter attains the highest order of truth by "establishing terms," it does not, in and of itself, persuade in view of its neutrality and divorce from particular circumstances and popular attitudes.[48]

Weaver is cognizant of a major objection which may be brought against his synthesis of dialectic and rhetoric--the objection "that rhetoric cannot be used by a lover of truth because it indulges in 'exaggerations.'"[49] Weaver answers this objection, asserting that while rhetoric inherently involves "emphasis" and "actualization," the "noble rhetorician" presents true potentialities to his auditors. Weaver cites the example of Winston Churchill who

"at the depth of Britain's political and military disaster...likened the future of Europe to 'broad sunlit uplands.'" Although Churchill's description was at variance with conditions of the time, Weaver observes that "if one took Churchill's premises and then considered the potentiality, the picture was within the bounds of actualization." Churchill was a responsible rhetor because his emphasis was reasonable. Weaver, therefore, sets up two criteria for an "honest" and "true" rhetoric: (1) it must be based on a preceeding value-laden dialectic,[50] and (2) the strategy (emphasis, etc.) used to communicate the previously discovered truth must be consonant with the outcome of the scientific process of inclusion and exclusion. Weaver acknowledges that such requirements assume that the rhetorician has both "conscience" and "insight."[51]

This narrative on Weaver's distinction between the invention of situational truth (factual versus dialectical discrimination of a subject) and presentation of such truth to a real audience (through rhetorical choices of emphasis), has implications for his effort to establish genus as superior to circumstance as argumentative types. Precisely what is the relationship between Weaver's treatment of rhetoric and dialectic and his discussion of the arguments of circumstance and definition? Weaver's analysis suggests that, while all visible claims belong to the province of rhetoric, genus-based assertions, which deal with general classes of things, represent a higher philosophic order than circumstantial arguments. Because the latter deal with specific detail, they may be regarded as being the product of a more overtly empirical or factual treatment of the subject. As a result, Weaver probably prefers the appeal to genus because such can be taken as a sign that a preceeding moral dialectic has taken place.[52] I interpret Weaver's view to be that the definitional position is best because it ideally combines dialectic (that which is the highest reality and which involves a careful consideration and ordering of terms) with rhetoric (that which assumes responsibility for arguments, involves feelings, considers both historical facts and audience opinions and which is a form of noble love). For instance, on the matter of Lincoln's slavery argumentation, Weaver's analysis would suggest that the following scenario took place: (1) inspired by moral values and on the basis of a dialectical analysis, Lincoln classified blacks as men; (2) he chose to rhetorically communicate the policy implications of that position via an argument based on genus; finally, (3) although Lincoln was aware of the circumstances, he was not really deflected by facts such as popular opinion and other situational variables. If Weaver

is correct that, in the case of Lincoln and others, an argument of definition (the visible, persuasive rhetoric) marks a sign of an underlying concern for values and use of dialectic, then it follows that an argument of circumstance may indicate that no true dissection of the subject has taken place and that the subject has been discriminated, therefore, by facts. Our task is to consider whether the arguments of definition and circumstance successfully supply such evidence as to whether the rhetor's invention was fact-laden (without reference to values) or dialectically-based (and prompted by moral sentiments).

It has taken some pages to reach this point in my narration on Weaver, but I now hope to be able to demonstrate the validity of my second proposition that even agreed-upon examples of circumstantial and definitional statements do not give necessarily accurate insight into the philosophical-moral position of arguers either generally or in relation to specific issues. In supporting this statement I should observe, first, that Weaver's conclusions about the revealing nature of fact and genus are based on his interpretation that these two forms may be considered to be "sources" of argument rather than as classified "manifestations" or argument. Weaver's description of dialectic as the source of truth, and rhetoric as the means of its propagation, suggests on the other hand, that examples of argument which are picked from a text cannot really be sources of argument since the origin of any visible argument would be the preceeding and invisible dialectic or factual invention. This distinction between argument-as-manifestation and argument-as-source is made clear in Weaver's comment about the nature of rhetoric as choice and emphasis.

> But here we must recur to the principle that rhetoric comprehensively considered is an art of emphasis. The definite situation confronts him with a second standard of choice. In view of the receptivity of his audience, which of the topics shall he choose to stress, and how? If he concludes that definition should be the appeal, he tries to express the nature of the thing in a compelling way. If he feels that a cause-and-effect demonstration would stand the greatest chance to impress, he tries to make this linkage so manifest that his hearers will see an inevitability in it. And so on with the other topics, which will be so emphasized or magnified as to produce the response of assent.[53]

Weaver thus assigns to the province of rhetoric the choice of whether ideas

are to be communicated and emphasized via circumstantial, definitional, cause-effect or analogic arguments. In this view, the source of an argument--a private discrimination of the subject by facts or essence--is distinct from the choice of the rhetorical form in which the truth is to be propagated. While invention may take place on the levels of fact or essence, the rhetor has four choices as to the vehicle of persuasion. Accordingly, the appearance of a kind of argument does not necessarily say anything about the intellectual origin of the statement, but, rather, indicates only that a given advocate believed that a given type of argument would be more persuasive in a given situation with given audience attitudes. Hence, while the hidden thought processes of the orator constitute the "source," or moral-philosophical basis of a claim, the kind of argument used constitutes a sign of rhetorical not dialectical/factual considerations.

The notion that the language of a particular argument owes more to the rhetorical than to the dialectical/factual choices of the advocate has implications for the validity of Weaver's efforts to divine the internal philosophy of a rhetor on the basis of the visible explanation of one's position. The separation between the sources of an argument and its public appearance in the dress of circumstance or definitional claims suggests that a conclusion may be reached, privately, on one basis and, at the same time, be propagated publicly, on another. Donald P. Cushman cites Richard Nixon as an example of a communicator who habitually decides something on one basis and justifies it on another.

> Richard Nixon believes that the most reasonable grounds for formulating a policy or making a decision may not be the most persuasive grounds for justifying that decision to the public. The area of policy formation and decision making is reserved for an expert audience while the area of policy justification is reserved for popular audiences. Several observers note the effect of this separation on Nixon's rhetorical style. "Nixon's rhetoric did not necessarily begin with a body of content to be communicated but rather with a concept of his audience and what it would demand or accept." The method for determining what his audience would demand or accept evolved from "an instinctive feel for his audiences' values" in the mid 1940s to the use of systematic audience profiles developed by a public relations firm in the 1960s and the 1970s.[54]

I cite Cushman's remarks on Nixon not to reinforce his image as "Tricky Dick,"

but rather to suggest that definitional arguments used by Nixon (and any other advocate, for that matter) may have little to do with his previous and private investigation of the subject.

This separation of investigation and rhetoric has, as I have indicated, specific implications for Weaver's conclusions about the arguments of Burke and Lincoln. In the instance of Burke's use of circumstance to oppose the war with America, Weaver argues, in essence, that Burke's emphasis demonstrates a lack of dialectical discrimination in favor of mere factual analysis. Burke is, thus, found to possess an inferior moral-philosophical world-view to that of Lincoln. In contrast, this present inquiry suggests the possibility that values might have impelled Burke to engage in a private dialectic convincing him of the "wrongness" of the ministerial policy, but that when it came time to communicate the results of the dialectic--turn truth into action via rhetoric--Burke chose the argument of circumstance as the vehicle in view of its likely greater persuasive effect given the facts of the situation and temper of the parliamentary audience. This interpretation gains credence from examination of the historical context of Burke's arguments. The Englishman's correspondence suggests that, in the weeks prior to the "Conciliation" speech, Burke had become personally dissatisfied with the government's colonial policy. Such a feeling that the ministry was wrong is indicated in this excerpt from a letter to Richard Champion. "I have been a strenous advocate for the superiority of this country," writes Burke, "but I confess I grow less zealous when I see the use of which is made of it. I love firm government, but I hate the tyranny which comes to the aid of a weak one. This day Lord North added Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and South Carolina, to the New England restraints, by a resolution in his committee. We talk of starving hundreds of thousands of people with far greater ease and mirth than the regulations of a turnpike."[55] That Burke made the rhetorical choice of circumstantial argument to communicate his dissatisfaction may be based on his belief that the parliamentary majority would be more influenced by an argument to the effect that their policy would fail as opposed to an assertion that the policy was wrong. Indeed, Burke's extensive use of parliamentary precedent was probably another rhetorical choice since the eighteenth century MP found precedent to be persuasive.[56] Weaver, on the other hand, makes the assumption that Burke's use of precedent (which constitutes, says Weaver, "a central part of his political thought") is not merely

a characteristic rhetorical choice based on the orientation of his customary audience. "If one is unwilling to define political aims with reference to philosophic absolutes, one tries to find guidance in precedent."[57] Again, Weaver may be correct when he cites Burke's arguments as evidence of a factual rather than a Socratic investigation of the subject; but, there are grounds to maintain that circumstance and precedent were used rhetorically by Burke as the most suasory vehicle for a hidden dialectic.[58]

If, then, Burke's use of circumstance is not an infallible sign of a preceeding factual, amoral and expedient analysis of his subject, does the presence of an argument of genus necessarily imply a preceeding ordering of terms by dialectic? The key term here, is necessarily. An argument of definition may result from value-oriented dialecticism but genus-based claims may result, with possibly equal probability, from sources other than a careful scientific scrutiny. First, it is possible that a genus has, as its source, a hasty prejudgment. No student of marketplace argument needs to be reminded of the human tendency to define and categorize on the basis of prejudice or ignorance. In his essay on the "Paranoid Style in American Politics," Richard Hofstadter writes of the tendency of right and left fringe groups to hold intensely to right versus wrong conspiratorial views of events. Their literature is not devoid of moral principle, nor application of the principle to contemporary events and facts. What is at fault, Hofstadter indicates, is the inevitable leap "from the undeniable to the unbelievable."[59] Thus, although having elements of the definitional argument--unwillingness to compromise, the presence of clearly articulated values about the world, etc.--the definition-type assertions of the extremists suggest bad judgment and hasty prejudice rather than careful delineation.

Another example of possible prejudice versus dialectic as a source of argument may be found by reading between the lines of Weaver's account of the Scopes trial on the teaching of evolution. Weaver makes a case that whereas the Scopes defense argued from a rhetorical position that evolution was factually true, the prosecution operated from a dialectical standpoint that evolution was against the law. Weaver finds the prosecution's dialectical bastion impervious to the lower level empirical sallies of the defense.

> It is at once apparent that the Tennessee "anti-evolution" law was a statement of the third class. That is to say, it was neither a collection of scientific facts, nor a statement about those facts (i.e.,

> a theory or a generalization); it was a statement about a statement (the scientists' statement) purporting to be based on those facts. It was, to use Adler's phrase, a philosophical opinion, though expressed in the language of law. Now since the body of philosophical opinion is on a level which surmounts the partial universe of science, how is it possible for the latter ever to refute the former? In short, is there any number of facts, together with generalizations based on facts, which would be sufficient to overcome a dialectical position?[60]

Weaver's use of the anti-evolution law as a philosophical position appears to assume that the deliberations of the Tennessee Legislature relative to the law were conducted in a dialectical fashion, since the law is cited as an order of knowledge higher than factual data offered in support of evolutionary theory. Now, the defense disputed the allegedly dialectical origin of the law, arguing that it was based on ignorance and prejudice.[61] If the defense is correct on the source of the law, then does the prohibition still amount to a higher order of knowledge?[62] In other words, can the presence of dialectical-sounding claims about evolution be taken necessarily as a sign of preceeding dialectical discrimination?

It may be objected, at this point, that the possibility of prejudicial reasoning on the part of the Tennessee Legislature does not deny the fact that the Scopes prosecution reasoned dialectically--i.e., they established the categories of legal and illegal and classified Scopes' act as an example of the latter. However, to cite this as the basis for a judgment that the prosecution's case was superior, assumes that there existed only one issue in the trial: did Scopes violate the law by teaching evolution? In contrast, my reading of Weaver's courtroom excerpts suggests the presence of at least one additional issue on which the defense mounted an apparently dialectical position--should a law against the teaching of evolution be passed? On this issue the defense argued that the law was "wrong"--that is, it was socially unproductive, counter to the principle of academic freedom and based on prejudice. The prosecution argued only the fact of the law's passage and the fact of the power of the legislature to proscribe the parameters of teaching in state-supported schools.

A second non-dialectical source of definitional arguments is ideology, which Weaver defines as something which "works to serve particular ends, and

therefore the changes in meaning that it produces will not be circumspective and must result in a degree of injustice."[63] As an example of ideologically-inspired definitional disputation, let me cite the Johnson Administration contention that the Vietnam War amounted to a struggle of freedom (represented by the Saigon government) against totalitarianism or slavery (represented by communist Hanoi). Such arguments were stated in a definitional fashion. The value-laden categories of "free governments" and "slave states" were established and applied to the particular circumstances of Vietnam. For example, President Lyndon Johnson explained the South Vietnamese resistance to North Vietnamese "aggression:" "Why do the Vietnamese fight on? Because they are not going to let others enslave them or rule their future."[64] Similarly, our aid to South Vietnam was described as being motivated by a desire to see freedom triumph over tyranny. The Administration rooted our ultimate intentions in lofty definitional propositions which were "commended to us by the moral values of our civilization."[65]

A study of cold war rhetoric since 1947 suggests that the language of antithesis in the Administration rationale for its Vietnam policy has, at least in part, an ideological origin. Whereas Administration critics pointed to the totalitarian nature of the Saigon government, endeavoring to overthrow the freedom versus tyranny interpretation of the war,[66] such arguments did not go to the heart of the Administration's reasoning. The identification of the South Vietnamese government as the force of freedom owed more to general cold war assumptions (the cold war ideology) than to specific details of Saigon policy and organizational structure. Based on the notion that World War II was caused by the failure of the democratic powers to curtail aggression by totalitarian forces, the cold war ideology postulated the need for strong defense of "free world" nations against communist aggression and subversion. Thus, in President Harry S. Truman's speech on aid to Greece and Turkey (1947) he reminded the Congress of the World War II fight for freedom against outside domination and emphasized the need "to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes."[67] Admitting that the Greek government was less than ideal, Truman, nevertheless, described it as "free," and "democratic." He called for aid to assure the survival of Greece "as an independent state." Reinforced by cold war conflicts in Europe and Asia, this language of antithesis became a rhetorical constant in foreign

policy argumentation. Thus, Truman's 1952 description of the cold war as a contest pitting "all the great resources of freedom" against "the slave world,"[68] was echoed by Dwight D. Eisenhower who, in his 1953 Inaugural Address similarly avered that "Freedom is pitted against slavery."[69] Is it any wonder, then, that the ideology of the cold war demanded the application to the Vietnam situation of the "free world versus communist tyranny" language of the cold war rhetoric? The cold war ideology, when applied to the situation of Vietnam required that because the Saigon government was anti-communist it was, by definition, the representative of the free world in conflict with the world exemplified by Hanoi. Arguing that such definitions did not fit--at least in the case of Saigon--Vietnam War skeptics opposed this process of identification via ideology.[70] Irrespective of the merits of Administration claims versus those of war opponents, it appears that the United States Government's definitional arguments rested on an ideological world view rather than a dialectical inquiry.

In conclusion, we should understand that definitional-sounding arguments may result from either prejudice or ideology rather than dialectic. This suggests that rhetorical critics must ever seek to distinguish false identifications from true ones. In this connection, Weaver identifies politics as an arena in which "quite secondary terms can be moved to the position of ultimate terms."[71] In addition to the misordering of value terms, Weaver cites the human tendency to misapply terms via exaggeration or ignorance, especially in times of crisis.

> And the psychopathic mind of war has greatly increased our addiction to this vice; indeed, during the struggle [World War II] distortion became virtually the technique of reporting. A course of action, when taken by our side was "courageous"; when taken by the enemy, "desperate"; a policy instituted by our command was "stern," or in a delectable euphemism which became popular, "rugged"; the same thing instituted by the enemy was "brutal." Seizure by military might when committed by the enemy was "conquest"; but, if committed by our side, it was "occupation" or even "liberation," so transposed did the poles become. Unity of spirit among our people was a sign of virtue; among the enemy it was a proof of incorrigible devotion to crime. The list could be prolonged indefinitely. And such always happens when men surrender to irrationality. It fell upon the Hellenic cities during the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides tells us in a vivid sentence that "the ordinary acceptation of words in their relation to things was changed as men thought fit."[72]

If, then, because of prejudice, ignorance, ideology or bad motive[73] terms may be falsely ordered and applied,[74] what guarantee have we that a definitional-sounding argument is a product of a legitimate discrimination and application of dialectical terms? Surely the mere fact that an arguer uses ultimate terms, maintains moral values and applies definitions, does not necessarily allow a favorable judgment of his moral-philosophic worth.

III

This conclusion brings me to the final proposition of this essay: that to gain insight into the moral-philosophical position of the rhetor, we must go beyond merely citing his use of circumstance and definition. We must analyze the morality and validity of the rhetor's use of terms and, further question his motive in using them.

In searching out the moral and intellectual sources of arguments, the critic should be aware that definitional arguments may arise from ignorance, prejudice and ideology as well as a dialectical discrimination of the subject according to values. This means that the critic should take a wider perspective than that of a seeker of examples of genus. The critic must come to some judgment about the rhetor's use of terms--his identifications and his emphasis in using them. Such a judgment is much more encompassing because it requires us to probe the morality and validity of definitions themselves, rather than to simply attest to their presence in a text. This moral-philosophical judgment requires three interrelated applications. First, the critic should evaluate the moral worth of the rhetor's emphasis--his ordering of the terms and the nature of the implications he draws from that ordering. For example, is the appeal to "national security" in the debate over military aid to anti-communist factions in Angola a higher order term than the demand that the aid follow "constitutional" procedures involving cooperation of the Executive with the Legislative Branch? On the matter of the disposition of Richard Nixon's Presidential papers and tapes, is Nixon's claim that the papers are his "property" higher than the argument that the public has a "right" to unhampered access to the documents? Further, in the Watergate tapes question argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Justices were required to sort out the primacy of "executive privilege" versus the Special Prosecutor's prerogative of subpoena for "criminal investigation." Weaver, to be sure, favors such evaluations of the moral primacy of terms.[75] However, his insistence that invocation of genus

demonstrates an inherently superior invention implies that the moral worth of an argument may be decided independently of a judgment of the morality of the definitions, themselves. In contrast I pose this question: Would it have been morally better to have argued, definitionally, for segregation in public facilities on the basis of "White Superiority" or to have argued against segregation from a circumstantial position that the isolation of large minority groups could not succeed? Seemingly, the critic must always evaluate the morality of the definitions rather than their mere presence and, since it is likely that more than one value term will apply to a situation, the critic must establish the moral primacy of the terms.

In addition to deciding the moral worth of the terms of dispute and their hierarchical position the critic's moral-philosophic analysis of definitional arguments would require a judgment as to whether the definitions maintained by an advocate "fit" the circumstances of a case. That is, whether the definitions were validly used. Consider, for example, the Johnson Administration claim that the Vietnam War could be characterized as a case of North Vietnamese "aggression" against South Vietnam. The aggression thesis had a markedly definitional quality about it. If, as Secretary of Defense McNamara argued, "In South Vietnam, as you well know, the independence of a nation and the freedom of its people are being threatened by Communist aggression and terrorism,"[76] then was not the United States responding to genus in coming to the aid of that country? Such a conclusion follows logically, unless, of course, the definition of "aggression" did not fit the facts of the situation. What if the conflict were a civil war or an internal revolution? Would our aid be appropriate if such alternative definitions were applied to the situation? Indeed, this is the perspective assumed by many opponents of the war. War detractors argued that North and South Vietnam were actually part of one nation making the war, by definition, a civil conflict. Other skeptics argued that the United States and Saigon were responsible for the war by refusing to hold the 1956 reunification elections which were mandated in the Geneva Agreements on Indochina.[77] Critics alleged, further, that the war in South Vietnam was basically an internal Southern matter which arose largely through the repressive policies of the Saigon Government,[78] that North Vietnam aided the Southern rebellion relatively late,[79] and that the Southern-based National Liberation Front was not a puppet of Hanoi.[80]

Without passing on the merits of the aggression thesis versus alternative interpretations of the war's origins, it is clear that the rhetorical critic has an obligation in this instance, and in others, to go behond the mere observation that the aggression thesis had elements of a definitional argument. The critic has the responsibility to pass judgment as to whether the genus was validly applied--whether circumstances were validly classified.[81]

Beyond judging the innate morality of definitions, their ordering, and the validity of their applicaiton to situations, the critic desirous of insight into the personality of a rhetor will find it necessary to identify the motives of the arguer in citing definitional-sounding claims in support of policy. Does the rhetor have noble or base motives? With respect to the question of motive, it is important to observe that Weaver recognizes that the motive of the rhetor may render a dialectic to be morally good or bad. "As for dialectic, if the motive for it is bad, it becomes sophistry; if it is good, it becomes a scientific demonstration, which may lie behind the rhetorical argument, but which is not equivalent to it."[82] This observation is important, for it underscores my point that the mere identification of a definitional argument as presumed sign of dialectical reasoning does not necessarily confer moral worth on the argument or arguer. A dialectic used to mislead--i.e., to falsely identify, order and apply definitions--is morally bad. We cannot know the moral philosophy of an arguer merely by classifying the type of argument he prefers; we must make a separate judgment about the motive of the dialectician, since arguments are based not only on scientific decisions but also on rhetorical ones pertaining to the persuasion of particular audiences. An understanding of the rhetorical motive is essential, because an immoral or amoral speaker might knowingly invoke an invalid or inferior genus for base rhetorical purposes, thus misleading or misinforming an audience.

Weaver's categorical preference for the argument of definition appears, in retrospect, to be inconsistent with his sophisticated explanation of the universalist or idealistic way of knowing versus a reality based on facts. Given his own epistemological assumptions, Weaver is simply unable to establish the inherent superiority of the definitional position. Weaver's admission that moral arguments, expressed via dialectical reasoning, are not necessarily more persuasive, eliminates the possibility that definitional arguments have a superiority based on their suasory force.[83] As a result, the alleged primacy of definition rests on the notion that its appearance reveals the rhetor to be

both a holder and user of values. However, this present inquiry has demonstrated that the argument of genus is but a fallible sign of a communicator's internal "vision of order." It must be remembered, in this connection, that Weaver separates invention (the discrimination of a subject via fact or dialectic) from rhetoric (the presentation of a subject to a specific audience via definition, circumstance, cause-effect or analogy). As a result, definitional arguments are a rhetorical choice which do not necessarily indicate that the speaker sincerely holds or uses values. Arguments of essence establish only that the arguer believed that a claim based on genus would be more persuasive to a specific set of auditors in a given context. Accordingly, the circumstance-based assertion should not be taken as prima facie evidence that a persuader dwells in a moral vacuum. Rather, the invocation of circumstance may have been viewed as a more effective vehicle for the propagation of internally held and applied values. The use of visible argument to infer personal philosophy is, then, only an approximation, just as a footprint in sand affords only vague clues as to the size and destination of a previous traveler. Given that the mere classification of argumentative type establishes an incomplete picture of a rhetor's thinking, the author of this present essay has proposed further tests of the moral mettle of arguers. Rhetorical critics, in my view, should judge: (1) the morality of the rhetor's terms, (2) the morality of his ordering of them, (3) the validity of their application and (4) the underlying reasons which motivated their selection. While Weaver criticizes the social scientist for his "practice of being excessively tentative in the statement of conclusions and generalizations,"[84] this research suggests that, regarding the utility of fact and genus typologies, Weaver might well have temporized more.

[1] Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric, Gateway Edition (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1970), pp. 56-57. Hereafter to be cited as Ethics. In a later essay, Weaver added the cause-effect pattern as a fourth form of argument. See Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland and Ralph T. Eubanks (eds.), Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), pp. 212-15. Hereafter to be cited as Language.

[2] Ethics, p. 112.

[3] Dennis R. Bormann, "The 'Uncontested Term' Contested: An Analysis of Weaver on Burke," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57 (1971), 298-305.

[4] James J. Floyd and W. Clifton Adams, "Weaver and the Problem of Selective Perception: A Content Analysis of Burke and Lincoln," Unpublished paper, Speech Communication Association Annual Convention, 1975.

[5] Language, p. 145.

[6] Ibid., p. 147.

[7] Ibid., p. 194.

[8] Richard M. Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 157. Hereafter to be cited as Ideas. The quotation is also to be found in Language, p. 43.

[9] Weaver, Ethics, p. 166, defines the "uncontested term" to be "the term which seems to invite a contest, but which apparently is not so regarded in its own context." It is interesting to observe that Weaver's typologies, themselves, may be "uncontested terms," since Weaver applies them without realizing that his applications "invite a contest."

[10] Bormann, 299-301.

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[11] Ethics, p. 57.

[12] Ibid., p. 89.

[13] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

[14] Ibid., p. 91.

[15] See Ibid., pp. 93, 95, and 56, respectively.

[16] John A. Garraty, The American Nation: A History of the United States (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), pp. 393-94. Cf. Ethics, pp. 80, 94, 105.

[17] Ethics, p. 102.

[18] See Garraty's account of the genesis of the proclamation, pp. 415-17.

[19] In this connection it is interesting to observe the relatively low contingency coefficient, C = .60, which Floyd and Adams, p. 12, report in their content codings of arguments using the typologies.

[20] Ideas, p. 12.

[21] Ibid., p. 130.

[22] Ibid., p. 59. Weaver sees this tendency reflected in the media which, by producing a "constant stream of sensation...discourages the pulling-together of events from past time into a whole for contemplation." See Ibid., p. 111.

[23] Ibid., p. 3.

[24] Ethics, pp. 49-50.

[25] Richard M. Weaver, Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), p. 113. Hereafter to be cited as Visions. Weaver, further observes that while "Instruction may be limited to the transmission of facts and principles it is desirable to know as a body of knowledge, but education is unavoidably a training for a way of life." Weaver, pp. 115-16, criticizes "progressive" education for its denial that there is a structure of reality to be learned.

[26] Ethics, p. 15 (also in Language, p. 71).

[27] See Ideas, p. 167 (also in Language, p. 54), Ethics, p. 27, Ethics, p. 16 (also in Language, p. 72), and Visions, p. 64 (also in Language, p. 174).

[28] Ethics, p. 16 (also in Language, p. 72). See, also, Language, p. 147.

[29] Visions, p. 64 (also in Language, p. 174) and Language, p. 197.

[30] Weaver believes that awareness of values preceeds dialectical reasoning, writing that "When we affirm that philosophy begins with wonder, we are affirming in effect that sentiment is anterior to reason. We do not undertake to reason about anything until we have been drawn to it by an affective interest. In the cultural life of man, therefore, the fact of paramount importance about anyone is his attitude toward the world." See Ideas, p. 19. Weaver's "good man," therefore, is a person who both knows values and who applies values via dialectic.

[31] Language, p. 148.

[32] Ideas, p. 60. Weaver admires the Southern culture, in part, because of "the unpragmatic and unempiric quality of the Soutern mind." Describing Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens as a dialectical writer, Weaver observes: "If one divides all humanity into Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas, according to a suggestion of George Santayana, he must allow Stephens a prominent place with the first who, because they serve ideas only, appear mad to men who take counsel of circumstances." See Richard M. Weaver, The Southern Tradition at Bay: A History of Postbellum Thought, edited by George

Core and M.E. Bradford (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1968), pp. 125, 128-129. Hereafter to be cited as Southern.

[33] Bormann, 302-304. Bormann's attack on Weaver's epistemology is problematic since Weaver is not only aware of the epistemological shift since the sixteenth century, which Bormann mentions, but also, Weaver specifically analyzes the consequences of the shift, concluding that the classic, pre-sixteenth century, way of knowing is superior to the modern. See Ideas, pp. 3 and 12-17, especially. It appears to me that until Weaver or Bormann operate on a consistent, mutual, epistemological foundation, that neither will prove the definitive superiority of either dialectically-based (definitional) or empirically-based (circumstantial) arguments. In contrast, my objection to Weaver, as outlined in the following pages, is rooted in the idea that, even granting his assumptions about argument and reality, Weaver, nevertheless, fails to demonstrate the necessary superiority of the definitional position.

[34] Ethics, p. 29.

[35] Visions, p. 56 (also, in Language, p. 163). For this reason, Weaver describes the dialectician, Visions, p. 65, as being "only half a wise man."

[36] Visions, p. 70 (also in Language, p. 181).

[37] Visions, p. 58 (also in Language, p. 165). Weaver suggests that those who exclusively use dialectic and logic are "afraid of the act of divination ...[which] sometimes takes the form of recognizing the universal in the single instance." Further, he claims that such an "intuitive type of mind" may be "concerned more with the states of being than with the demonstrable relationship of parts." See Richard M. Weaver, Life Without Prejudice and Other Essays (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1965), p. 82. Hereafter to be cited as Life.

[38] Visions, pp. 57-61 (also, in Language, pp. 164-69).

[39] Visions, p. 70 (also in Language, p. 182).

[40] Visions, pp. 64 and 62, respectively (also, in Language, pp. 174 and 170). Such excerpts convince me that Bormann, 302, exaggerates when he writes that, "What he [Weaver] is demanding then, is that we return to a dialectical type of argument in political discourse."

[41] See Life, pp. 86-90. Note that Weaver, pp. 90-93, also identifies certain weaknesses in the chain of Thoreau's dialectic--specific logical faults which are separate from the general political unfeasibility of the dialectic. It should be observed, however, that while Weaver recognizes the weaknesses of pure dialectic, he nevertheless continues to favor it as a way of knowing superior to the factual discrimination of a question. Indeed, Weaver, himself, practices dialectic in addition to preaching its virtues. See, for example: (1) his dialectical analysis that "total war" is contradictory to the nature of "war," thereby becoming "pure and ultimate unreason" in Visions, pp. 98-101; (2) his effort to "see the problem in its essence and ask whether the worship of comfort does not follow necessarily from loss of belief in ideas and thereby induce social demoralization" in Ideas, p. 118; (3) his objections to certain assumptions of evolutionary theory in Visions, pp. 139-140; and (4) his conclusions about the attaining of a vantage point for cultural criticism in Visions, pp. 74-75.

[42] Visions, p. 63 (also in Language, p. 172). Reinforcing this point in Life, p. 79, Weaver writes: "As Aristotle maintained, rhetoric and dialectic are counterparts, each one needing the other. But rhetoric and dialectic may become dangerously separated, and then the users of them become enemies ceasing to help each other as both strive to go it alone. In this event the dialectician becomes the mere abstract reasoner, and the rhetorician becomes a dealer in sensational appeals. The one ceases to recognize circumstances, which are somewhat determinative in all historical questions. The other ceases to refer his facts to controlling principles and ideals. For the first there are a good many jocular epithets, of which 'egghead' is a modern instance; to the latter the term 'demagogue' is most widely applied. Kant observed that concepts without percepts are empty, and percepts without concepts are blind. This will define the two opposed positions." In Visions, p. 56 (also in Language, p. 162) Weaver cautions that "societies cannot be secure unless there is in their public expression a partnership of dialectic and rhetoric."

[43] Ethics, pp. 27-28.

[44] Visions, p. 63 (also in Language, p. 171). See also, Visions, p. 70 and Language, p. 205 on the issue that dialectic is not responsive to feeling.

[45] Language, p. 206.

[46] Visions, p. 70 (also in Language, p. 182). In this connection, Weaver argues against the "Socratic tradition, which holds that it is intellectually treasonable to take popular opinion into account."

[47] Language, p. 211.

[48] See, respectively, Ethics, pp. 17 and 28.

[49] Ethics, p. 19 (also in Language, p. 76).

[50] See, respectively, Ethics, pp. 17 and 25 (also in Language, pp. 73 and 81).

[51] See, respectively, Ethics, pp. 19 and 20 (also in Language, p. 76).

[52] This interpretation is reinforced by a passage in Southern, p. 389, in which Weaver asserts that the South committed an error "in its struggle against the modern world" by failing to root its position in a higher order of knowledge--i.e., a value-laden universalist position which was dialectically secured. The South, writes Weaver, failed "to study its position until it arrived at metaphysical foundations. No Southern spokesman was ever able to show why the South was right finally. In other words, the South never perfected its world view, which determines in the end what we want and what we are. Legal arguments like those of the apologia are but a superstructure resting upon more fundamental assumptions; journalistic defenses, however brilliant in phrase, are likely to be evern less; and fiction may serve only as a means of propagation. The South spoke well on a certain level, but it did not make the indispensable conquest of the imagination. From the Bible and Aristotle it might have produced its Summa Theologia, but none measured up to the task, and there is no evidence that the performance would have been rewarded."

In this connection, it is interesting to observe Weaver's application of his epistemology to the political arena. Weaver establishes a three-fold construct of the political spectrum. One extreme of the scale is the radical--represented by Thoreau (see Life, pp. 86 and 94)--who, although holding value premises, uses a purely dialectical approach to the neglect of rhetoric, thereby producing an unreasonable, unrealistic set of policy proposals. (Weaver, Ethics, p. 16, suggests that rhetoric deals, naturally, with policy questions.) The radical, in other words, "makes his will the law" (Life, p. 159). At the other extreme is the liberal who, because he clings to no set of fixed principles (Life, pp. 13, 153 and Language, p. 195), uses a purely rhetorical or factual method of reasoning to the neglect of dialectic. Edmund Burke is representative of this class of reasoners who produce only expedient policy alternatives (Ethics, p. 58). Finally, Weaver offers the conservative as one who, in avoiding the dialectical and rhetorical extremes of the radical and liberal, clings to principles (Life, p. 159), uses the principles in the political arena to create "a program capable of rallying men to effort and sacrifice" (Ethics, p. 80), but tempers the ideal with the circumstances so as to render his policy positions reasonable and workable. For instance, John Randolph "made economic provision" for his freed slaves, whereas "In Thoreau's anti-slavery papers one looks in vain for a single syllable about how or on what the freedmen were to live" (Life, p. 94). Weaver further identifies the conservative as one who has piety--he is tolerant and accepts the right of others to their value orderings even if these differ from his own (See Life, p. 167 and Ideas, pp. 175, 183). Lincoln and John Randolph are Weaver's conservative prototypes.

Weaver's construct, I believe, involves at least two apparent weaknesses. First, Weaver appears to commit the same error he finds in Thoreau. To wit, Weaver renders his terms--radical, liberal, conservative--into "ideological constructs quite adapted to their author's play of fancy, but out of all relationship to history." See Life, p. 86. Among the unrealistic assumptions implicit in the construct are: (1) the assumption that liberals do not believe in any principles--a view which, I shall demonstrate in succeeding pages, cannot be established even given that they favor arguments of circumstance, and (2) that conservatives are motivated by values to use dialectical analysis in reaching consistent applications of value. That is, that conservatives never blindly defend the status quo (Life, pp. 158, 160). A second

weakness in the construct is that Weaver does not specify the point at which the radical and the conservative diverge--i.e., that point at which the defense of principle becomes unrealistic and out of tune with history. Indeed, I would argue that the difference between Weaver's definition of radical and conservative is a matter of differential perception. Weaver describes Lincoln, for example, as a conservative because: (1) he held values on the slavery question, (2) applied them, dialectically, (3) used definitional arguments to present his value position, while, at the same time (4) avoided an extremist (radical) point of view (see Ethics, p. 113). Yet, Lincoln was perceived as a radical by the slaveholding states which seceded after his election to the Presidency. Further, my earlier analysis of Lincoln's attention to circumstance in the slavery case makes it possible to perceive the Great Emancipator as too "liberal" on the slavery question in view of his hesitation to act on his principles by eliminating the institution. Hence, we may also wonder at what point does the conservative becomes the liberal?

[53] Language, p. 217.

[54] Donald P. Cushman, "The Effect of Richard Nixon's Rhetorical St[illegible]on his Decision Making Processes and the Climate of the Rhetorical Contr[illegible]sy in which he Participates," Unpublished paper, Speech Communication Association Annual Convention, 1974, pp. 5-6.

[55] Letter of March 9, 1775 in Charles William Richard Bourke (ed.), Correspondence of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke (4 vols.; London: Francis and John Rivington, 1844), II, 26.

[56] P.D.G. Thomas, The House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 8.

[57] Ethics, p. 74.

[58] This interpretation gains credence from Weaver's own observation that "It must be confessed that Burke's interest in the affairs of India, and more specifically in the conduct of the East India Company, is not reconcilable in quite the same way with the thesis of this chapter [that is, the argument that Burke preferred circumstance to genus]." See Ethics, p. 65. Let us,

however, for the sake of argument accept Weaver's interpretation that, on the whole, Burke's writings exemplify the deliberate presentation of fact in favor of principle. Under what conditions would such prove Burke's amorality? I have already demonstrated that the Englishman's reasoning in "Conciliation with America" may well have been prompted by moral sentiment. Yet, there is further evidence that the "factual" Burke of the Conciliation speech is not the man of expedience portrayed by Weaver. If Burke characteristically used circumstance, this may indicate that he shared the modern view that facts are the highest form of reality. (Careful reading of "Conciliation with America" suggests that there is support for this interpretation.) If such is the case, then one might expect Burke to object to being termed morally inferior for merely using what he believed to be the philosophically superior form of inquiry. Thus, Burke's hypothetical retort to the Ethics of Rhetoric might be: "Moral values always underlie and inspire my arguments. I use circumstantial claims because (1) these are philosophically superior for the analysis of policy questions and (2) factual arguments have the advantage of being more convincing to the uncommitted while at the same time appearing less inherently offensive to the opposition."

[59] Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays, Vintage Book (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 37-38.

[60] Ethics, p. 31. Weaver opines that the argument of circumstance is the rhetorical correlary to Adler's first order of knowledge--"facts about existing physical entities" (Ethics, p. 30)--for he states that the argument of circumstance "stops at the level of perception of fact" (Ethics, p. 57). In opposition to this interpretation, I would assert that no argument may be said to stop at the "perception of fact" because arguments (as linguistic constructions) deal with dialectical terms which, according to Weaver, require intellectual construction rather than positivistic perception. (Recall his distinction between positive and dialectical terms in Language, p. 145.) Indeed, Weaver observes that positive propositions such as "the 'position' that water freezes at 32° F., are not matters for rhetorical appeal"--i.e., are not properly stated in the language of arguments (Ethics, p. 27). Thus, Weaver appears to equivocate in his assertion that the argument of circumstance is inferior. While he justifies this conclusion by analogy to Adler's levels of

knowledge, he, at the same time, admits that the mere perception of a fact--a positive proposition--cannot be a rhetorical argument. Accordingly, since an argument of circumstance does not deal with positive terms, it cannot be a mere perception of fact. Arguments of circumstance deal with dialectical terms--as do all arguments--and, thus, implicitly or explicitly offer interpretations of reality. The significance of my point is to suggest that one of Weaver's proofs as to the inferiority of circumstance is open to question.

[61] Ethics, pp. 41 and 44. I use the term prejudice here to denote an unthinking, hasty judgment which is not open to reason--something about which a person not only does not think, but about which he refuses to think. Weaver rightly points out that, in a neutral sense, "prejudice" amounts to the holding of value premises about the world. As a result, he asserts that "Life without prejudice, were it ever to be tried, would soon reveal itself to be a life without principle" (Life, p. 12). Weaver, however, later makes a distinction between "what is rightly called prejudice and what is conviction" (Life, p. 115).

[62] Even assuming that the prosecution's position was dialectic on the issue of Scopes' offense, it is debatable whether the dialectic versus rhetoric dichotomy may be maintained. Weaver argues that "the argument of the defense... was that evolution is 'true'" (Ethics, p. 30); but calls this a factual or empirical position. I would question, initially, whether a general proposition affirming the truth of evolution is strictly equivalent to a "factual" position that "X datum supports evolutionary theory." The former appears to be a "higher order" statement than the latter which does conform to the description of a "first order" measurement. Further, it appears that the defense, in addition to citing factual support for evolution, also made what must be regarded as clear scientific value statements about the theory. The defense argued that evolution was "an extremely valuable idea" (Ethics, p. 44), and that evolution was the basis for the scientific study of biology (Ethics, p. 43). Do not these latter assertions conform to Weaver's description of the higher-order-than-factual level of knowledge: "A statement about the value or the implications of the theory...would be knowledge of the third order; it would be the the judgement of a scientific theory from a dialectical position" (Ethics, p. 31). Hence, the simple dichotomy of fact versus genus may not provide an accurate perspective from which to judge the Scopes trial debates.

[63] Language, p. 133.

[64] Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks of Welcome to Vietnamese Leaders Upon Arriving at Honolulu International Airport, February 6, 1966 in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson (2 vols.; Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1967), I, 150.

[65] U.S. Department of State, Viet-Nam: The Third Face of the War, by Lyndon B. Johnson, Far Eastern Series 134, pubn. 7897 (May, 1965), 5.

[66] Critics of the Administration challenged this language of dichotomy which was involked to justify America's Vietnam policy, suggesting that the Saigon Government's oppressive measures rendered such a contrast invalid. The 1956-63 Diem regime and succeeding military governments were said to be narrowly based, prone to police state tactics and reluctant to promote significant economic and social reform. See Joseph Kraft, "A Way Out in Viet-Nam," in Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall (eds.), The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 320, William C. Johnstone, "U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia," Current History, 50 (1966), 109-110, Bernard B. Fall, "Vietnam: the New Korea," Current History, 50 (1966), 88, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966 (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967), p. 37, George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (Delta Book, 1967), pp. 102-103 and Bernard B. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis (2nd revised ed.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), pp. 265-67, 271, 309 and 323.

[67] See speech in U.S. Congress, Joint Session of the House and Senate, President Harry S. Truman, 80th Cong., 1st sess., March 12, 1947, Congressional Record, 93, 1981.

[68] Excerpt from the 1952 State of the Union Address in Fred L. Israel (ed.), The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966 (3 vols.; New York: Chelsea House-Robert Hector Publishers, 1966), III, 2986.

[69] Excerpt from the 1953 Inaugural Address of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Davis N. Lott (ed.), The Inaugural Address of the American Presidents: From Washington to Kennedy (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 259.

[70] Bernard B. Fall disputes the notion that South Vietnam was a bastion of freedom as distinct from the police state in the northern part of Vietnam, writing that, "In other words, there is simply not yet enough of a difference between the two regimes, in their relations between themselves and their citizens--and the North has the more efficient politico-military apparatus--to make the citizens of the South rally to its defense. That is why there can be no genuine comparison between the Berlin Wall and the 17th parallel: In Berlin, the barrier separates a total dictatorship from a true working democracy; in Viet-Nam, it separates two systems practicing virtually the same rituals but invoking different dieties." See, Fall, Two Viet-Nams, p. 398.

[71] Ethics, p. 231 (also in Language, p. 110).

[72] Ideas, p. 163 (also in Language, p. 49).

[73] Weaver points out that the "false lover" fears both a true dialectic and an examination of alternatives on an issue. See Ethics, p. 12 (also in Language, p. 67).

[74] Weaver describes "charismatic terms" as being those which have a great susceptibility to misuse, identifying, as representatives of this class, such terms as "freedom," and "democracy." See Ethics, pp. 227-32 (also in Language, pp. 105-112).

[75] See Ethics, p. 231. Indeed, Weaver's entire theory of communication may be termed a rhetoric of values. Weaver opposes the doctrines of nominalism and cultural relativism and argues for a notion of culture as a man-made value system (Visions, p. 12), and education as value training (Visions, p. 113 and Life, pp. 43, 48). He favors a committed rhetoric in which the rhetor knows, seeks and uses values.

[76] Robert S. McNamara, "United States Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, 50 (1964), 562. In this connection, it is interesting to observe that Weaver cites "aggression" as a term subject to misordering as an ultimate one. "There are many signs," he writes, "to show that the term

'aggressor' will soon become a depository for all the resentments and fears which naturally arise in a people. As such, it will function as did 'infidel' in the mediaeval period and as 'reactionary' has functioned in the recent past. Manifestly it is of great advantage to a nation bent upon organizing its power to be able to stigmatize some neighbor as 'aggressor,' so that the term's capacity for irrational assumption is a great temptation for those who are not moral in their use of rhetoric." See Ethics, pp. 231-32 (also in Language, pp. 110-111).

[77] See Charles DeGaulle, "Statement on Southeast Asia," in Viet-Nam Reader, p. 270, Kahin, "Excerpts from National Teach-In on Viet-Nam Policy," in Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 291-92, and Bernard B. Fall, "How the French Got Out of Viet-Nam," in Viet-Nam Reader, p. 91.

[78] Fall, Two Viet-Nams, p. 336.

[79] Ibid., pp. 357-59.

[80] Fall, Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 253-54, and Schlesinger, pp. 34-35.

[81] The issue of whether definitions fit the situation is analogous to the question of whether a dialectic (for whatever motive) becomes so rarified as to no longer apply to the real world as per Weaver's example of Thoreau on "Civil Disobedience."

[82] Visions, p. 64 (also in Language, p. 174). In Ideas, p. 19, Weaver expresses a related thought about motive: "How frequently it is brought to our attention that nothing good can be done if the will is wrong! Reason alone fails to justify itself. Not without cause has the devil been called the prince of lawyers, and not by accident are Shakespeare's villains good reasoners. If the disposition is wrong, reason increases maleficence; if it is right, reason orders and furthers the good."

[83] It should be observed that, at one point, Weaver does imply that arguments closely connected to principle--presumably definitionally-oriented claims--have a persuasive advantage, writing that "The political party which

Abraham Lincoln carried to victory in 1860 was a party with these moral objectives. The Whigs had disintegrated from their own lack of principle, and the Republicans emerged with a program capable of rallying men to effort and sacrifice--which are in the long run psychologically more compelling than the stasis of security." See Ethics, p. 80. Weaver (Ethics, p. 83) also believes that, in the longrun, circumstantial arguments may be punished "with failure."

[84] Language, p. 149 and Ethics, p. 192.